

Bystander intervention: School engagement versus shame management

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What is “bystander intervention”?

Bystander intervention is a kind of behavioral competence motivated to –

- (a) protect the victim(s)
- (b) enhance the wellbeing of the victim(s)
- (c) promote a safe and respectful school environment

Theoretical integration

Relational perspective

- Social connectedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bowlby, 1969; Hirschi, 1969)

Shame management perspective

- Shame acknowledgment vs shame displacement (Ahmed et al, 2001)

What does past research tell us?

School engagement

- more academic achievement
- more moral engagement capacity
- less behavioral problems

(Sources: Ahmed, 2001; Eisenberg et al., 2000; Finn & Rock, 1997)

Shame and its management

SHAME ACKNOWLEDGMENT (adaptive)

- feeling shame
- taking responsibility
- making amends

SHAME DISPLACEMENT (non-adaptive)

- blaming others
- hitting out at others
- feeling retaliatory anger

What does past research tell us? (cont'd)

Shame management

- victim-oriented empathic concern
- self-control
- helping others
- less impulsivity
- less antisocial behavior

(Sources: Ahmed, 2001; Batson et al., 1981; Harris, 2001)

Hypotheses

Main effect hypotheses -

- 1) school engagement will increase bystander intervention
- 2) shame acknowledgment will increase bystander intervention
- 3) shame displacement will decrease bystander intervention

Hypotheses (cont'd)

Interaction effect hypotheses –

4) School engagement X Shame acknowledgment

When children fail to acknowledge shame, school engagement protects against the negative effect of shame acknowledgment on bystander intervention

5) School engagement X Shame displacement

When children use shame displacement to confront wrongdoing, school engagement protects against the negative effect of shame displacement on bystander intervention

Methodology

- data collected through the "Cross-national School Behavior Research Project" (Australia, Bangladesh, England, Israel, Italy, and South Africa)
- 1452 students from Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 49% - girls
- average grade – 8.42 (7th to 10th grade)
- interactive video questionnaire survey

Measures

Bystander intervention

- ♦ would you object to what was happening?
"Stop, this is enough"
(M = 4.43; SD = .93; alpha = .75)

School engagement

- ♦ Smiley face scale
- ♦ School engagement-withdrawal scale
(M = 4.49; SD = .75; alpha = .65)

Shame management

- ♦ Management Of Shame State: Shame Acknowledgment and Shame Displacement (MOSS-SASD; Ahmed, 2001)
(Shame acknowledgment: M = 3.16; SD = .80; alpha = .84)
(Shame displacement: M = 1.36; SD = .59; alpha = .84)

Table 1. Standardized beta coefficients from a hierarchical regression analysis in predicting bystander intervention

Variables	Model A	Model B	Model C
Gender (0 male; 1 female)	.05*	.05*	.05*
Grade	.01	.00	.00
Bullying experiences	-.45***	-.14***	.01
Victimization experiences	.15***	.05*	-.03
School engagement	-	.19***	.12***
Shame acknowledgment (SA)	-	.29***	.27***
Shame displacement (SD)	-	-.20***	-.11***
School engagement * SA	-	-	-.11**
School engagement * SD	-	-	.23***
Adj R square	.19	.35	.39

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Figure 1. The role of liking for school in moderating the relationship between shame acknowledgment and bystander intervention

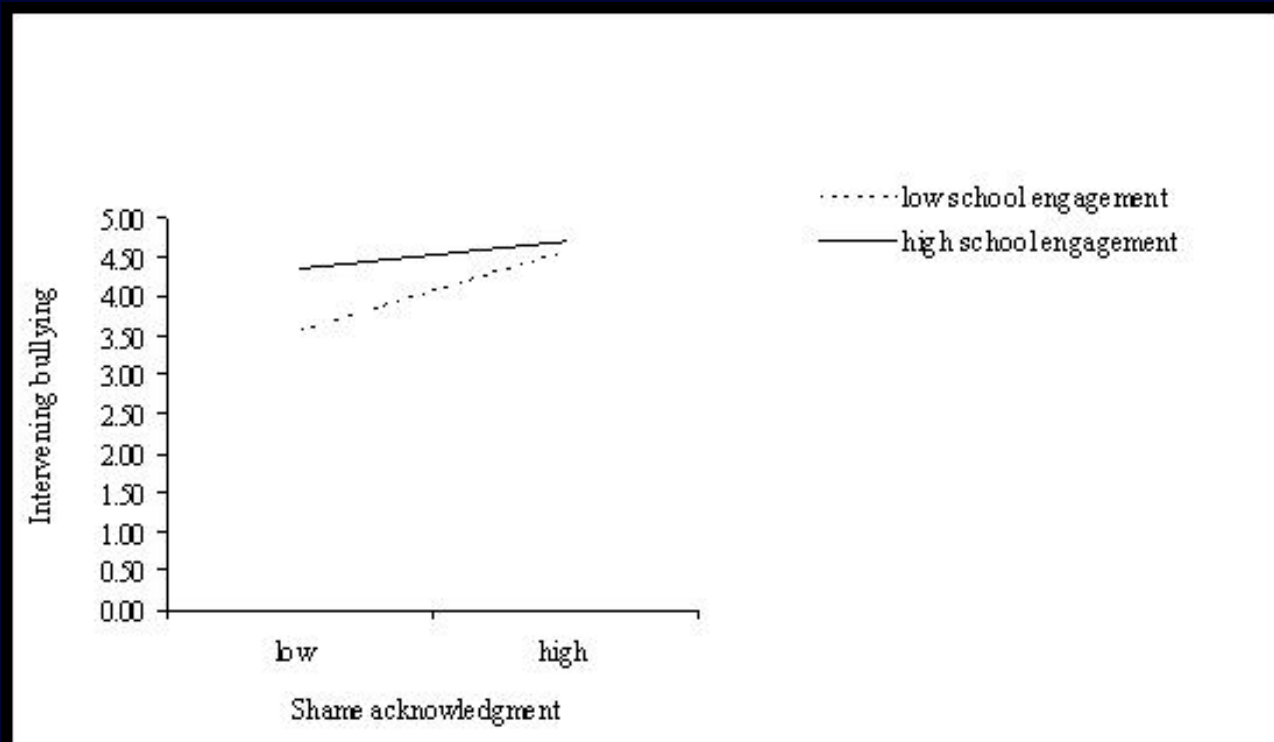
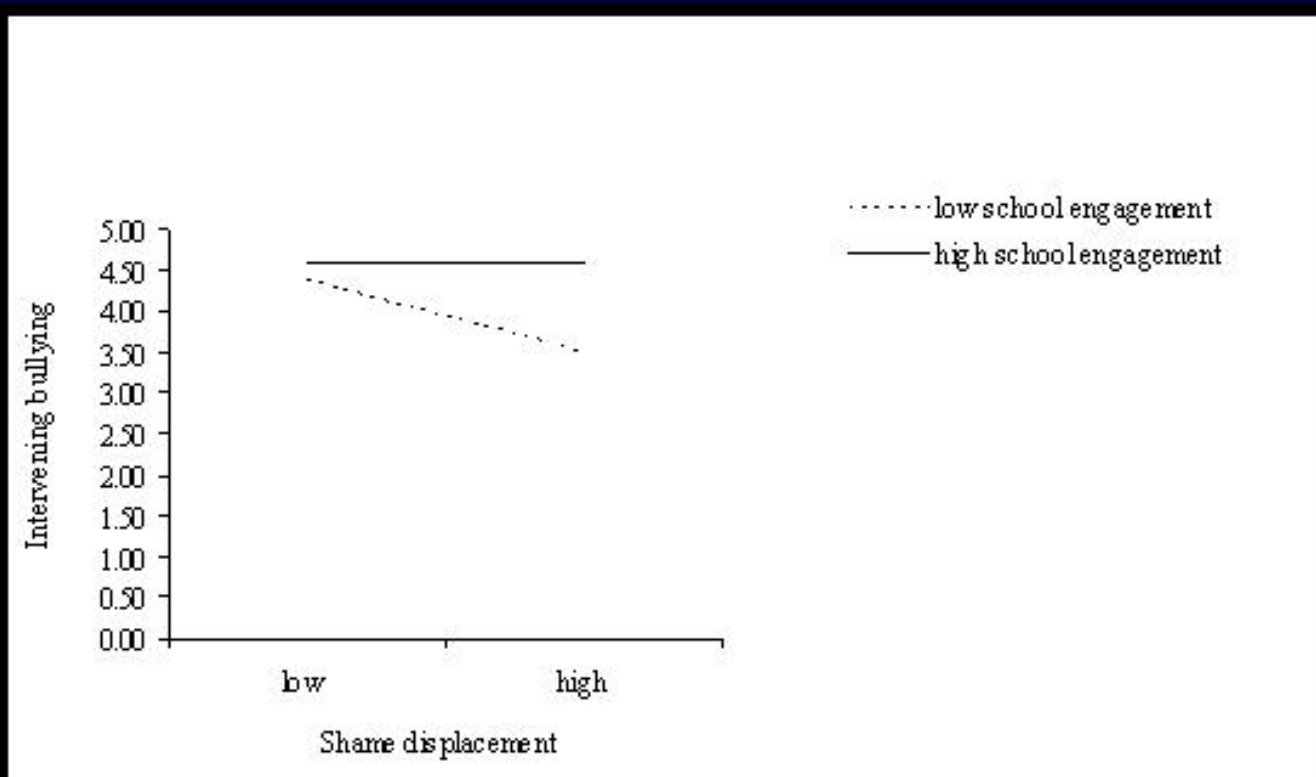


Figure 2. The role of liking for school in moderating the relationship between shame displacement and bystander intervention



Summary of results

- School engagement increases bystander intervention
- Shame acknowledgment increases bystander intervention
- Shame displacement reduces bystander intervention
- School engagement buffers the adverse effects of non-adaptive shame management (less shame acknowledgment more shame displacement) on bystander intervention